

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BL, PA

SUBJ: HELICOPTERS FOR DELIVERY TO BOLIVIA

REF: ASUNCION 2569

1. THE BOLIVIAN ARMY TEN-YEAR PLAN CONTAINS CONTINGENCIES AGAINST PARAGUAYAN INITIATED LAND OFFENSES AGAINST BOLIVIAN TERRITORY, BUT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE THERE IS NO BOLIVIAN PLAN OR PURPOSE TO REGAIN TERRITORY LOST TO PARAGUAY IN THE CHACO WAR.

2. THERE HAS BEEN NO EVIDENCE OF ANY INCREASED ANTI-PARAGUAYAN SENTIMENT IN THE BOLIVIAN ARMED FORCES OR THE GOB. INDEED, THE REVERSE APPEARS TO BE THE CASE STARTING WITH AN EXCHANGE OF MILITARY ACADEMY CADETS IN MARCH 1974.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, AIR FORCE COMMANDER ADRIAZOLA, AN INTENSELY AMBITIOUS MAN, HAS INCREASED THE COMBAT CAPABILITY OF THE BAF SEVERAL FOLD IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, INCLUDING THE PURCHASE OF HALF A DOZEN B-25 BOMBERS
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OF WWII VINTAGE AND SOME ARMED T-33 TRAINERS AND F-86'S.

NONE OF THESE WERE PURCHASED FROM THE U.S. AND WE EXPECT THAT IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE MOST OF THESE AIRCRAFT WILL BE WHAT MY DEFENSE ATTACHE REFERES TO AS STATIC DISPLAYS. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE PURCHASES WERE MADE MAINLY TO ENHANCE ADRIAZOLA'S PRESTIGE IN THE ARMED FORCES, BUT I CAN SEE WHY THEY MIGHT ALSO MAKE THE PARAGUAYAN AIR FORCE A BIT NERVOUS.

4. THE MAP SUPPLIED HELICOPTERS ARE UNARMED AND ACCORDING TO BAF ANNOUNCED PLANS WILL BE USED FOR SAR AND CIVIC ACTION ROLES. THEY COULD OF COURSE STRAP ON LIGHT AUTHOMATIC WEAPONS, AND I UNDERSTAND THAT THE BAF MAY WELL BUY 7.62 CALIBER WEAPONS FOR THIS PURPOSE. I BELIEVE THIS CAPABILITY IS INTENDED FOR INTERNAL SECURITY PURPOSES (REMEMBER CHE GUEVARA). IT IS OUR ASSESSMENT THAT BOLIVIAN GROUND FORCES DO NOT HAVE THE CURRENT CAPABILITY TO MAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT MOVES AGAINST PARAGUAY DUE TO THEIR LACK OF MOBILITY AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT IN SOUTHEAST BOLIVIA.

5. I AM QUITE CONVINCED THAT AT LEAST UNDER THIS GOVERNMENT THE ONLY REVANCHIST SENTIMENT INVOLVES TERRITORY LOST TO CHILE, AND EVEN IN THIS CASE BOLIVIA'S AMBITION IS LIMITED TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER A "CORRIDOR" TO THE SEA AND A SEA-PORT. THEY MIGHT EVEN SETTLE FOR LESS THAN THAT. IF THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM IS EVER RESOLVED AND SOME FUTURE GOVERNMENT NEEDS A RALLYING CAUSE OR A DISTRACTING ONE, OR IF OIL IS DISCOVERED IN THE GENERAL AREA OF THE CHACO, A CAMPAIGN TO REGAIN TERRITORY LOST TO PARAGUAY COULD GET UNDERWAY. FOR THE TIME BEING HOWEVER, THE GOB, I.E. THE ARMED FORCES, ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH OBTAINING SUPPORT FOR THEIR PARAMOUNT FOREIGN POLICY CONCERN, NAMELY, "SALIDA AL MAR".
STEDMAN

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